

Moderator's Message for Special Town Meeting, November 2022 (Part 1)

Residents of Bedford,

On November 14, 2022, we will gather for a Special Town meeting in the Bedford High School gymnasium. This will be the first time Bedford has held a Town Meeting in this location. We are meeting there to make it possible for all attendees to be in the same room together, as we consider the Town's business.

A large turnout is expected for the meeting. We will be sitting in chairs and in the bleachers. We will be sitting closer together than in past meetings in the high school auditorium. We will all need to be patient and respectful of each other while participating in such close quarters.

I want to address two topics as we prepare for Town Meeting – masking and seating at Town Meeting, and resident presentations. I will address more topics later this week.

We are all aware of the impacts the pandemic has had on our daily lives, our health and our interactions with each other. Under current local, state, and federal guidance, the best defense we have against the adverse health effects of Covid-19 are to get fully vaccinated, test frequently, isolate after testing positive, and if especially vulnerable, wear masks when in large, indoor gatherings. There are no requirements for indoor gatherings to have participants socially distanced or masked. Attendees at our upcoming Special Town meeting will not be required to wear masks, but I encourage anyone who wishes to do so, to wear a mask while attending. Speakers at Town Meeting should remove their masks when speaking at a microphone. I ask everyone to support whichever choice our friends and neighbors make regarding masking.

Some residents who will wear masks have asked to sit in areas with other masked residents. This seems like something we can easily do, and some areas of floor and bleacher seats will be marked this way. Doing this will create "masks preferred" areas and allow everyone at the meeting to feel reasonably comfortable with their surroundings. Any resident wishing to wear a mask can sit anywhere in the gym. Residents not wearing a mask are asked to please avoid sitting in areas marked as "masks preferred".

There are also residents who may have difficulty navigating the bleachers and need to use a chair on the gym floor rather than climbing to a bleacher seat. Please consider giving up a seat if you see someone in need, or better yet, head up into the bleachers when you arrive and leave the floor seats open for others.

Residents who wish to speak at Town Meeting during debate of an article may wish to present visual materials to the meeting using the town's computer and projector. Materials in electronic format must be provided to the Town Manager's office no later than 4:00 PM on Tuesday, November 8, 2022. Materials can be e-mailed to townmanager@bedfordma.gov, or dropped off in the office via a USB. Materials will be

checked for compatibility and use on the computer system and pre-loaded so that they are available at the meeting.

Any materials presented must be in accordance with the [town's presentation standards](#). These requirements ensure that materials are clear and visible for all in attendance. They are available on the town's website on the Town Meeting page. All presentations must also adhere to the debate rules adopted at town meeting. Feel free to contact me if you need further assistance at TownModerator@bedfordma.gov.

In the next few days, I will send out another message regarding Town Meeting rules and behavior, types of motions, and amendments. I will also cover the role and authority of the Moderator in conducting Town Meetings and preview any actions I intend to take.

Mark Siegenthaler
Town Moderator